



# PUNTA GORDA ENGLEWOOD BEACH

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The Charlotte Harbor Gulf Island Coast

## Charlotte County Tourist Development Council Meeting Minutes Friday, December 10, 2021

A meeting of the Charlotte County Tourist Development Council was held Friday, December 10, 2021, at Murdock Administration Building, Conference Room B-106, 18500 Murdock Circle., Port Charlotte, FL.

### **Members Present**

Kathy Burnam  
Commissioner Christopher Constance  
Councilmember Jaha Cummings  
David Haynes  
Councilmember Mark Kuharski  
Janet Watermeier  
Robin Madden  
Kelly Williamson  
Keith Farlow

### **Staff Present**

Sean Doherty, Director of Tourism,  
Lena Applegate, Social Media & Leisure Sales  
Manager  
Maureen Morgenthien, Director of Marketing  
Sean Walter – Business Development Director,  
Sales/Sports  
Cynthia Hinson, Director of Communications &  
Public Relations  
Jerry Jones, Film Commissioner  
Dan Roe, Tax Collector's Office  
Elie Fischhof, Fiscal Services  
Emily Lewis, Deputy County Administrator  
Lori Tetreault, Deputy County Attorney

### **Members Absent**

N/A

### **Guests**

Lois Croft, Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association  
Callie Stahl, Peace River Wildlife Center  
Joseph St.Gemain, Downs & St. Germain Research  
Isiah Lewis, Downs & St. Germain Research

#### **I. Call to Order & Welcome – Commissioner Christopher Constance**

Commissioner Christopher Constance called the Charlotte County Tourist Development Council (TDC) meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

#### **II. Roll Call**

A quorum was established.

**III. Welcome to new TDC Board Member**

Commissioner Constance formally welcomed Councilmember Mark Kuharski as a new Board member to the Tourist Development Council. Councilmember Kuharski gave a brief personal and business background.

**IV. Citizens' Input**

Lois Croft, Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association, reminded everyone that Tourism Day will be held in Tallahassee on January 19, 2022. Croft also made a reminder announcement that the FRLA will be hosting a fundraiser named the Craft Beer and Wine Festival on April 9, 2022 at Fishermen's Village.

Callie Stahl, Executive Director of the Peace River Wildlife Center, provided an update regarding the center's move and expansion. Stahl advised that the center is currently waiting on permits and site development is underway. Stahl announced that the center will have their groundbreaking ceremony in March at the new site on Henry Street.

**V. Approval of TDC Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made by Janet Watermeier, seconded by Kathy Burnam, to approve the October 1, 2021 minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

**VI. Tourist Tax Report – Dan Roe**

The tax collector report was presented by Dan Roe. Roe reported totals for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2021. Since the last report, August and September revenues were collected bringing the total for the fourth quarter of 2021 to \$1,248,478.50. That amount total is approximately 36.8% higher than the previous fiscal year.

Roe continued to report on collections for the first quarter of fiscal year 2022. Total collections for October 2021 total \$358,477.99. There are still 530 total suspect accounts on file. Currently, there is an increase of about 81 properties since the last report.

**VII. Budget Report – Elie Fischhof, Fiscal Services**

The fiscal report was presented by Elie Fischhof. Fischhof reported on the final expenditures for fiscal year 2021. Fischhof continued to report that with a budget of \$3.1 million from the first 3 cents, operating expenditures were approximately \$1.96 million and interfund transfers were approximately \$755,000. The total budget that had been expended was approximately 83%. From the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> cents which had a \$600,000 budget of which approximately \$79,000 was expended for Promo Activities General and approximately \$500,000 was expended for Promo Activities Advertising.

Fischhof advised that we are now two months into the fiscal year 2022 budget of \$3.2 million. This portion of the budget is derived from the first 3 cents. Most of the interfund transfers which total \$750,000 are almost complete. Fischhof advised that current encumbrances total \$262,878. The total budget expended is almost 42%. The total budget of \$600,000, which is comprised of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> cents, has a total encumbrance of \$20,000 for Promo Activities General and \$130,109 from Promo Activities Advertising.

**VIII. Robin Madden – Budget Review**

Robin Madden reported that the budget appeared to be in order.

**IX. Downs & St. Germain Research - Presentation**

Joseph St. Germain, President of Downs & St. Germain Research, presented the Annual Economic Impact & Visitor Tracking report. The report reflects data that was collected beginning October 2020 through September 2021.

**X. Director/Staff Report – Sean Doherty**

Sean Doherty, Tourism Director, provided a handout highlighting the visitor demographic trend for the years 2019, 2020 and 2021. Doherty continued to provide a recap of the tourism department.

**XI. Citizen’s Comments**

There were no Citizen Comments.

**XII. Council Comments**

David Haynes reported that demand is still very high for vacation rentals, as well as real estate sales. Available inventory remains low.

Keith Farlow advised that through his restaurant, they are seeing about a 1000 people a day. He continued to advise that the number one reason stated for people visiting is to visit family.

Councilmember Jaha Cummings advised he has been seeing a trend in visitors with more money and staying on vacation for longer periods of time. Councilmember Cummings continued to advise that he has noticed a relationship between the hospitality industry and investors in terms of repurposing properties.

Councilmember Mark Kuharski provided an update on the marketplace property in downtown Punta Gorda. He advised that there is a developer who is proposing a three-phase project to include a county parking structure in front of the convention center.

Kelly Williamson reported the hotel continues to show record numbers.

Robin Madden reported that rentals are up 12% this year. Madden also reported that real estate inventory is very low.

Janet Watermeier advised that traffic was up for the Peace River National Arts Festival which was recently held at Laishley Park. Watermeier continued to state that the vendors that came from all over the country reported that this event was one of the best selling events that they have had. Watermeier reported that the Visual Art Center is ready for Christmas in the gift gallery which is all local original art. She also reported that the center has expended this year and now have a hall of handmade ornaments and decorations available to sell.

Kathy Burnam reported that sales are up in the stores in Fishermen’s Village. Burnam also reported that the New Year’s Eve celebration will begin at 6:00 pm and fireworks will be at midnight.

Commissioner Constance advised that if he is reassigned to the TDC for 2022, he will not attend the February 11, 2022 meeting due to a prior commitment. Commissioner Constance continued to advise that he will need to appoint a vice-chair as Nancy Prafke is no longer on the board. Commissioner Constance appointed Councilmember Jaha Cummings as vice chair who accepted the position.

**XIII. Next Scheduled Meeting**

The next scheduled TDC meeting is at 9:00 a.m. Friday, February 11, 2022. The meeting will be held in the B-106 Conference Room, Administration Building, 18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte.

**XIV. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 10:43 a.m.